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ABSTRACT

Because of the increasing number of certified school psychologists being employed to provide direct psychological services to West Virginia's county school systems, a study was conducted to determine what kinds of services are needed in order to help those children experiencing academic and/or adjustment difficulties in the classroom. Between September and November, 1975, a Needs Assessment Survey was devised, piloted, and tested in three West Virginia County School systems that were receiving services from a certified school psychologist for the first time. The assessment instrument was introduced to 78 elementary and junior high school teachers by their school psychologist at a teachers' meeting; it was completed and returned the same day. The Needs Assessment Survey consisted of an open-ended question and nineteen psychological services to be rated on a scale from 1 to 5. An analysis of the date obtained indicates that teachers want to be an integral part of the assessment and subsequent educational planning for children referred to the school psychologist. The results imply that teachers do not feel their needs for psychological services are being fully met by professionals who do not discuss a child's difficulties with them, do not include them in planning an appropriate educational program for the child, and do not provide follow-up services and restructing of recommendations to meet the changing needs of the child. The teachers also feel a need for services other than the individual assessment of children, such as parent education, counseling, tutor training, acting as a resource person, and serving as an agent of educational change. (MM)

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TEACHERS VOICE NEEDS FOR SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

School psychological services are a relatively new entity in the State of West Virginia. In the past, regional community mental health facilities provided the majority of psychological services available to schools. Until recently, only a limited number of certified school psychologists were employed to provide direct services to West Virginia's county school systems. During the 1975-1976 school year, the number of certified school psychologists employed in West Virginia has more than tripled, and estimates range from twelve during the 1974-1975 school year to approximately thirty-nine employed (1975-1976 school year) either by county systems or regional education service agencies. Because of the increasing number of certified school psychologists being employed to provide direct psychological services to West Virginia's county school systems, the question naturally arises: what kinds of services are needed in order to help those children experiencing academic and/or adjustment difficulties in the classroom?

The present study was conducted to answer this question. Since classroom teachers work with such children each day, it became apparent that a device to survey teacher needs for psychological services was in order. Therefore the present Needs Assessment Survey was conducted. The specific purpose behind assessing these needs is threefold: 1) to develop a tool to assess teachers' needs for psychological services which was easy to administer and interpret 2) to determine teachers' priorities in terms of the kinds of services they perceive as being most important and beneficial 3) to develop a list of priorities for psychological services which could be provided according to their importance and benefit.

Between September and November, 1975, the present Needs Assessment Survey was devised, piloted, and tested in three West Virginian county

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school systems. These counties were chosen from a state region which was receiving services from a certified school psychologist for the first time. The subjects were 78 elementary and junior high school teachers who taught kindergarten through eighth grade. The assessment instrument was introduced to teachers by their school psychologist at a teachers' meeting, and the teachers were instructed to fill out and return it the same day.

The Needs Assessment Survey itself consisted of an open ended question and nineteen psychological services to be rated. The open ended question was as follows:

> "Imagine for a minute that the services listed below could be provided on a consistent basis. Which services do you feel are most needed from the school psychologist?"

The subjects were asked to read the question and then to rate the 19 services on a scale ranging from 5 (very much needed) to 1 (not needed at all). The following services were listed:

1. Parent consultation
2. Counseling (individual and/or group)
3. Ready access to the school psychologist's services
4. Tutor training (adult and/or peer)
5. Psychological consultant
6. Resource person
7. In-service training (on topics not chosen by teachers)
8. In-service training (on topics chosen by teachers)
9. Test administrator (I.Q. testing)
10. Test administrator (assessment of reading and math skills)
11. Provide and assist with systematic educational change
12. Case follow-up and adjustment
13. Individual assessment of students exhibiting a particular difficulty (including a teacher interview concerning the situation)
14. Individual assessment of students exhibiting a particular difficulty (no discussion with teacher concerning difficulty)
15. Creating an educational program (cooperatively with teacher) to meet a student's individual needs
16. Creating an educational program (independent of teacher) to meet a student's individual needs
17. Classroom observation of student to aid in diagnosis and remediation
18. Parent education
19. Special class placement

An analysis of the mean scores obtained indicates that no specific service received an average rating of 5 or 1. Nine services received an average rating that ranged from 4.00 to 4.99 (much needed), eight services received an average rating that ranged from 3.00 to 3.99 (fairly needed), and the three remaining services received an average rating that ranged from 2.00 to 2.99 (not much needed). These results are presented in Table I.

All categories of psychological services, except three, were rated by teachers to be at least "fairly needed." As can be seen from Table I, teachers especially feel a need to be included in all phases of the child study process. In fact, with the exception of counseling and parent education, they feel the greatest need to participate in the child study process. Teachers not only want to assist in diagnosis but also want to be involved in the creation of a functional program to meet a student's needs. Of particular interest is teachers' need to be involved in the case follow-up. Not only do teachers wish to be involved in the child study process but they are also concerned about the attention and progress the student is making. Finally, the priorities ranked as fourth and seventh and a half illustrate the teachers' need to have ready access to a school psychologist. It appears from these data that teachers view school psychological services as a much needed service in the schools.

It is interesting to note that psychological testing is rated as being less needed than other major areas. Although rated as being "fairly needed," testing is not as high a priority as some of the other areas of psychological services. Possible reasons for the lower rating given to testing include:

1) Increased media and educational presentation of the growing controversy over abuses of psychological testing.

2) Past experience with psychological reports containing test results but no feasible recommendations for remediating academic weaknesses.

3) Ambiguous research results concerning the validity of psychological tests.

4) Presentation of alternatives to psychological testing for assessment purposes.

5) Awareness that testing is not a panacea for educational difficulties.

6) Research indicating that psychological testing can be discriminatory and biased against particular cultures within our society.

Although teachers rated testing below other services that could be provided, it should be noted that testing is realistically viewed by teachers as useful but not most important.

It is evident from the data obtained that teachers want to be an integral part of the assessment and subsequent educational planning of children referred to the school psychologist. These results imply that teachers do not feel their needs for psychological services are being fully met by professionals who 1) do not discuss a child's difficulties with them, 2) do not include them in planning an appropriate educational program for the child, and 3) do not provide follow-up services and restructuring of recommendations to meet the changing needs of the child. They also feel a need for services other than the individual assessment of children such as parent education, counseling, tutor training, acting as a resource person, and serving as an agent of educational change. In general, teachers feel the need for a variety of psychological services to be readily accessible within the schools, and the task remains for school psychologists to insure that these needs are adequately and consistently met.

TABLE I

Results of Teacher Needs Assessment Survey including $\bar{X}$ rating scores and priorities for a list of 19 possible psychological services.

Need	Raw Score	$\bar{X}$ Rating	Priority
Individual assessment of students exhibiting a particular difficulty (including a teacher interview concerning the situation)	346	4.4	1
Creation of a specific educational program to meet a student's individual needs (cooperatively with the teacher)	333	4.3	2
Case follow-up and adjustment of recommendations	330	4.2	3
Ready access to a school psychologist's services	327	4.2	4
Counseling (individual/group)	321	4.1	5
Parent Consultation	320	4.1	6
Psychological Consultation	313	4.0	7.5
Parent Education	313	4.0	7.5
Placement in Special Education	309	4.0	8
Behavioral observations to aid in diagnosis and remediation	303	4.0	9
Tutor Training	291	3.7	10
In-Service Training (Topics chosen by teachers)	290	3.7	11
Resource Person	283	3.6	12
Provide and assist with systematic educational change	280	3.6	13
Test administration (reading and math achievement)	274	3.5	14
Test administration (I.Q. Testing alone)	247	3.1	15

Need	Raw Score	$\bar{X}$ Rating	Priority
Creation of a specific educational program to meet a student's individual needs (independent of teacher assistance)	210	2.7	16
In-Service Training (Topics not chosen by teachers)	197	2.5	17
Individual assessment of students exhibiting a particular difficulty (No discussion with teacher concerning the situation)	188	2.4	18